

LAYOM Watts Empowerment Zone

A fact sheet about the community served by the Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement.

LOCATION

The empowerment zone served by LAYOM in Watts consists of eight census tracts in South Los Angeles.¹

The area is roughly bounded by 92nd Street to the north, Central Avenue to the west, the Imperial Highway to the south, and I-5 and Mona Boulevard to the east.

POPULATION

The population of the Watts empowerment zone is 30,177 (2000 Census). 50 percent of the population is under 21, compared with 33 percent in the city of Los Angeles.

Watts is a community that is defined by migration and immigration. Over 30 percent of the population is foreign-born, compared with 25 percent ten years ago. 76 percent of immigrants in the Watts empowerment zone arrived in the U.S. within the past 20 years. The racial mix has shifted over the past ten years. In 1990, the population was 58 percent Black and 43 percent Latino. By 2000, 61 percent of the population was Latino, and 38 percent was Black.

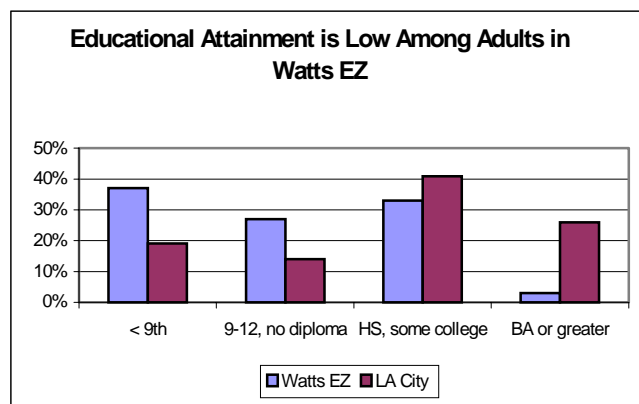
	Empowerment Zone	City of Los Angeles
Population	34,830	3,694,834
Male	48%	49%
Female	52%	51%
Under 21	50%	33%
Latino/Hispanic	61%	47%
Black	38%	11%
NH White	1%	30%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0%	10%
% Foreign Born	33%	41%
Entry 1990-2000	35%	38%

EDUCATION

Educational attainment in the Watts empowerment zone is lower on average than in the city of Los Angeles, and it seems to be stagnant. The percentage of adults who earned at least a BA degree increased by just one point from 1990 to 2000.

Just 3% of adults attained at least a BA in 2000.

The number of adults with less than a 9th grade education actually increased by 5 percent, perhaps a result of increased immigration to the area. In all, 64 percent of adults in this community do not have a high school diploma. The 2000 census reflects 3 percent of area adults have earned a BA degree, whereas 26 percent of adults in the City of Los Angeles attained this level of education.



LINGUISTIC ISOLATION

50 percent of households in the empowerment zone report that Spanish is their primary language, compared with 34 percent citywide and 33 percent just ten years ago.

34 percent of Spanish-speaking households are linguistically isolated, meaning no one over 14 in that household speaks English well. This compares with 13 percent ten years ago.

EMPLOYMENT

Labor force participation rate in these census tracts is 46 percent, compared with 60 percent in the city of Los Angeles. This low rate may indicate that residents participate in the informal economy but may also reflect the low educational attainment of residents.

(Continued on reverse)

¹2000 Census Tracts included in this analysis are: 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2426, 2427, 2430, and 2431.

The Watts empowerment zone has an unemployment rate of 22 percent, nearly 3 times the city's rate. Employed residents are over-represented in sectors of the economy that tend to be low-skilled and low-paying. For example, 32 percent of employed adults in the Watts empowerment zone work in production, transportation, or material moving occupations, compared to 15 percent in the city of Los Angeles. Residents are also concentrated in service occupations and under-represented in more skilled, higher-paying occupations.

Selected Occupations	Empowerment Zone	City of Los Angeles
Production, transportation, material moving	32%	15%
Service occupations	20%	16%
Construction	14%	8%
Sales and Office	23%	27%
Management/Professional	11%	34%

INCOME/POVERTY

The Watts empowerment zone is impoverished; the median household income in 2000 was \$19,600, about one-half the median income in the city of Los Angeles. Per capita income was just \$6,800 in 2000, compared with \$20,700 for the city.

Over 50 percent of area children live in poverty.

The empowerment zone's poverty rate of 46 percent is more than twice as high as the city's. In addition, 59 percent of children under 18 live in poverty, compared with 31 percent of children in the city.

Income and Poverty	Empowerment Zone	City of Los Angeles
Median household income	\$19,631	\$36,687
Population in poverty	46%	22%
Children in poverty	59%	31%

While 24 percent of area households received public assistance in 2000, this represents about half of the population in poverty in this area.

HOUSING

Watts is an area where families should still be able to afford to live. The average median rent in the census tracts in the empowerment zone is just \$491 per month, 27 percent less than median rent in the city.

Buildings in the empowerment zone are about the same age on average as those in the rest of the city, averaging about 42 years old. Homes and apartments are severely overcrowded by HUD definition; the 28 percent severe overcrowding rate is 56 percent higher than the city's rate. Despite the overcrowding, the vacancy rate is still very high, the hallmark of an area with slum and blight conditions.

The Watts empowerment zone is a renter's community; 64 percent of households rent their residence. Although this number is high, it is not as high as for many other low-income neighborhoods, evidence of the long tenure of some area residents. However, the low homeownership rates do indicate a population lacking wealth and assets.

Selected Characteristics of Housing	Empowerment Zone	City of Los Angeles
% Renter-occupied	64%	61%
Median year structure built	1960	1960
Median gross rent	\$491	\$671
% Severely overcrowded	28%	18%
Vacancy rate	11%	5%

LOS ANGELES YOUTH OPPORTUNITY MOVEMENT

In the Watts empowerment zone, LAYOM provides educational and employment opportunities as well as supportive services for youth ages 14-21. We work hard to link youth with the resources that will help them achieve success. Our programs include tutoring, mentoring, college preparation, job readiness training, job placement services, recreational activities, and leadership development.

The Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement will promote youth achievement by working with families and community partners to create opportunities that help youth reach their education, employment, and personal development goals.